

\$1,000. We do not know Dr. Clarke, nor his competency as a surgeon, the thoroughness or character of his investigations, nor of course the credit justly due him. But it is safe to say that of the 1,578 examining surgeons, it is not likely that Dr. Clarke, appointed in the same mode as all the rest, occupied, either professionally or otherwise, any position commanding superior to the general average.

Nay, more. We feel sure that Dr. Clarke's record as an examining surgeon is in nowise better than that of many others; and it strikes us as unfair to a hardworking and meritorious class of men to select out one single man for praise, while as to all the others the report is silent, or, what is worse, condemns by contrast.

Dr. Clarke, of course, understood the object of his mission; he knew the theory that was to be maintained. It is possible visions of larger and more permanent jurisdiction and better salary under the new plan dazzled his mental eyes, and his diagnosis was more severe, his rulings more strict, than they would else have been.

It is very likely that many other men so situated might have done the same. Notwithstanding, we prefer to believe, until some better proof comes, that the mass of the examining surgeons do their duty both by the Government and the pensioner.

We of the NATIONAL TRIBUNE stand as sentinels to give the alarm when what we consider injudicious or pernicious action is contemplated, but we can do no more unless the body of men thus attacked rally for themselves and their own protection.

This they should do at once, for the recommendation of the Commissioner justly has much weight with the committees and with Congress.

They must strengthen our hands by prompt aid, by instant and large additions to the subscription-lists of our paper, by prompt and ready support, pecuniary and otherwise, by correspondence with us on the subjects of interest to both, so that we can come to the attack again with an assurance of hearty sympathy from a large and influential body of men.

The NATIONAL TRIBUNE has done and will do its duty by them and all others; let them do their duty by the NATIONAL TRIBUNE.

Reforms Needed in the Pension Office.

We use the word 'Reforms' advisedly, we do not mean economize—we do not mean reduction of salaries, we mean such judicious increase of pay and positions as shall secure more accuracy, more educated talent, more efficient work by the officers in Washington and their local employees.

We mean that the Commissioner shall be placed on an equality with the Commissioner of Patents, that the Medical Referee shall have the full pay and emoluments of a full Army Surgeon of ten years standing. That the grade of examiners and assistant examiners be created and maintained in the Pension Office as in the Patent Office, with equal pay; that the examining Surgeons be paid three dollars for each examination and five dollars in obscure and difficult cases. That the board to be ordered by the Commissioner shall receive each the same pay; in short, the time, labor, and responsibility, actually given to the service of the Government be remunerated in fair proportion.

We propose to demand and require, good, efficient, scientific work, and to pay for it what it is worth—and we commend these views to the Committee on Pensions in the two Houses, as the decent and proper solution of the embarrassments, which are now alleged to involve the administration of the Pension Office.

Thomas B. Hood, M. D., Medical Referee.

A brief sketch of the Medical Referee of the Pension Office will no doubt be acceptable to our readers, most of whom are interested in the accuracy and good faith of his rulings.

It gives us great pleasure to testify, in the most public manner, to the singular completeness of his faculties for the position he occupies, and the great labor and true judgment with which he fulfills the delicate and important duties of his office.

Dr. Thomas B. Hood was born in West Virginia in the year 1829, and is now in the prime of manhood.

He graduated at the Ohio Wesleyan University, at Delaware, Ohio; and took the degree of Doctor of Medicine at the Medical College of Cleveland, Ohio.

He went into the service of the United States as assistant surgeon of the 76th Ohio Volunteer Infantry in 1861 and 1862, and was promoted to be surgeon of the U. S. Volunteers, in which capacity he served in 1864, 1865, and 1866. After the bloody battle of Shiloh, in April, 1862, he was the surgeon in charge of the General Hospital for the 3d Division.

He was in charge of the hospital transport "Connecticut," in the Army of the Potomac, in 1864 and the early part of 1865, and was Surgeon in Chief of the District of Mississippi, from September 1865, to May, 1866, and honorably mustered out in October, 1866.

In June, 1870, he was appointed Medical Referee, the duties of which office he has continued to discharge with great acceptance.

Bounty Equalization Bill.

We have no new steps to chronicle in this issue in relation to this just and proper law. In both the Senate and the House it was long since referred to appropriate committees, but as yet no action has been taken. With a bill that has been so thoroughly discussed by the press and in Congress, which has been approved by committee after committee in both houses, it would seem that there should not be ground for any delay, but that it should be reported back and passed at once. Both parties have fully indorsed the principle in their national conventions, and instructions are on file from the legislatures of most of the States demanding its passage. It is about time that the Committee on Military Affairs both of the House and Senate should report favorably, and give the members a chance for a square vote.

Let us see as early as we can who ventures to vote against this measure of justice so long and so unreasonably delayed.

Pay up the debt due to the soldiers, gentlemen of the House and Senate, before paying off any other.

Let claims and questions of currency and all others of that sort stand out of the way awhile, and do what you have repeatedly promised and have as repeatedly failed to perform.

President Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address.

March 4th, 1865.

FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN: At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then, a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued seemed very fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have constantly been called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented.

The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself, and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured. On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it, all sought to

avoid it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war, seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide the effects by negotiation.

Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish; and the war came.

One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but located in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was somehow the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union by war, while Government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. Neither party expected the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease even before the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God, and each invokes his aid against the other. It may seem strange that any man should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing his bread from the sweat of other men's faces.

But let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayer of both should not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses, for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe unto that man by whom the offense cometh."

If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of these offenses, which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through his appointed time, he now wills to remove, and that he gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to him?

Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn by the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, that the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

With malice towards none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on, to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wound, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and a lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Annual Report of the Surgeon-General, U. S. A., 1877.

[Extract.]

It is my duty to call attention to the fact that the efficiency of the pension division of this office has been seriously impaired by the reduction of clerical force made in July, 1874, and October, 1876. The number of clerks and stewards employed in the division during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1874, was 94. They searched and sent out replies in 13,535 cases, leaving only 975 on hand unanswered at the close of the fiscal year. In other words, the division was then only about three weeks behind its work, which was satisfactorily discharged without unnecessary delay. The reduction of force, which took effect July 1, 1874, diminished the number of clerks to 66; and, as the number of demands for information did not diminish, the work began to fall steadily behindhand. July 1, 1876, the number of cases remaining unanswered was 12,919; nevertheless, October 10, 1876, another reduction of clerical force went into effect, still further diminishing the number of clerks to 46. The inevitable result, in spite of the most strenuous efforts, has been the very large number of cases now reported as awaiting action.

Congress at its last session authorized the Secretary of War to detail 20 enlisted men for clerical work in this office. This act went into effect July 1, 1877. The assistance thus afforded will certainly be very considerable, as will undoubtedly appear in the report for the next fiscal year; but it is my duty to point out that this additional force is not sufficient to meet the exigencies of the case. All that can be hoped is that, if the number of demands on the office continues about the same as the average number received annually for the last seven years, the number of replies will approximate the number of demands made, so that the division will not fall much further behindhand in its work. But it cannot recover the lost ground with the clerical force now allowed; and every consideration of justice and economy makes it so desirable that it should do so, that I earnestly recommend the employment of fifty additional clerks of Class I for so long a time as may be necessary to enable the division to dispose promptly of the work now in arrears.

J. K. BARNES,
Surgeon-General, U. S. A.

TO ATTORNEYS.—Correspondence is invited with attorneys who are desirous of retiring from the claim business and who have claims pending before the Departments. Also with such as are now prosecuting claims, or who may desire to engage in the business, and wish to act in conjunction with an attorney resident in Washington. To such, liberal terms will be offered. Location in Washington, extensive acquaintance, and many years' experience, give me facilities not excelled by any attorney.

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